Proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility
Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation
Environmental Impact Statement Preparation

Scoping Fact Sheet

SUMMARY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is currently developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed construction and operation of the Idaho Spent Fuel Storage Facility, an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI), at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) near Idaho Falls, Idaho. The scoping process gives the public an opportunity to participate. During the scoping period, the public is asked to identify potential areas of concern, propose other reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, and rank or prioritize areas of potential impact.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DECIDED?

The NRC is an independent government agency that is responsible for protecting public health and safety and the environment with respect to the safe use of nuclear materials in the United States. In order to ensure this protection, the NRC must decide whether or not to authorize the construction and operation of the proposed ISFSI, including the transfer of certain spent nuclear fuel from its current location in spent fuel pools at the INEEL into dry storage canisters at the proposed ISFSI, also at the INEEL.

BACKGROUND

The NRC received a license application and environmental report for the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility from Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation (FWEC) in November 2001. Operation of the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility involves the receipt of spent nuclear fuel, removal of the fuel from existing storage containers, repackaging the fuel into new canisters, and placing into interim storage. The spent nuclear fuel, currently being stored in spent fuel pools at the INEEL, will be transported by the Department of Energy (DOE) approximately 500 yards to the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility. The environmental report examined the environmental consequences of several alternatives related to the construction and operation of the ISFSI.

WHY PREPARE AN EIS?

According to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), federal actions that have the potential for significantly affecting the quality of the human environment require the preparation of an EIS. NRC's rules consider the licensing of an ISFSI to be an action requiring preparation of an EIS. DOE has previously evaluated the generic environmental impacts and some site-specific impacts associated with dry spent fuel storage at INEEL. Therefore, the NRC is considering to what extent NRC's EIS can adopt, incorporate by reference, or tier upon DOE's previous EIS. However, the DOE analyses may not have addressed all project specific environmental impacts. Whether adopting or tiering, the NRC EIS will document the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility ISFSI.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS EIS?

This EIS will evaluate environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility ISFSI at the INEEL. As part of its impact analysis, the EIS will document the impacts from transportation of the spent nuclear fuel to the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility, impacts from receiving, transferring, and repackaging the spent fuel, and environmental impacts from selected credible accident scenarios.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

No Action: The no-action alternative would be not to build the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility. Under the no-action alternative, NRC would not approve the license application to construct and operate the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility. DOE would continue to store the spent nuclear fuel in its current location on the INEEL in spent fuel pools.

Proposed Action: The proposed action involves the construction and operation of the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility ISFSI at the INEEL. The applicant would be issued an NRC license, under the provisions of 10 CFR 72, that would authorize the applicant to transfer, repackage, and place into dry storage, certain types of spent nuclear fuel.

Other alternatives may be identified through the scoping process.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF CONCERN

This list may be modified as a result of public scoping.

Air Quality
Earth Resources
Health and Safety
Socioeconomic Impacts
Environmental Justice
Cumulative Impacts
Natural Disasters
Cultural Resources
Ecological Resources
Water Resources
Waste Management
Unavoidable Adverse Impacts
Indirect Effects–e.g., transportation

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS?

- To ensure that significant issues related to the proposed action are identified and are properly studied.
- To eliminate unimportant issues.
- To identify alternatives that will be examined in the EIS.
- To involve the public early in the EIS process.

YOUR COMMENTS ARE REQUESTED

NRC is hereby soliciting comments on our plans to prepare an EIS for the proposed ISFSI.

Please submit your comments on or before September 16, 2002. Please note Docket No. 72-25 on all comments. Written comments should be addressed to Mike Lesar, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Comments will also be accepted by email at isffacility@nrc.gov or by fax at (301) 415-5398, Attention: Matt Blevins.

INFORMATION CONTACTS

For information on the NRC NEPA process as applied to the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility, please contact Matt Blevins at (301) 415-7684. For technical information associated with the proposed facility please contact Randy Hall at (301) 415-1336.

Information and documents associated with the Idaho Spent Fuel Facility project may be obtained from NRC's Idaho Spent Fuel Facility web page: http://www.nrc.gov/waste/spent-fuel-storage.html and through NRC's electronic reading room: http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm.html. Documents may also be obtained from NRC's Public Document Room located at U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters,
11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland.